

Message Text

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15

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 AID-20 IO-14 OMB-01 EB-11 NIC-01 DRC-01

/163 W

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R 050400Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8417

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USDEL JEC PARIS

USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 11601

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS:PDEV ECON PGOV VN

SUBJECT: PHAM VAN DONG REVIEWS STATE OF THE NATION

1. SUMMARY: PREMIER PHAM VAN DONG IN HIS SEPTEMBER 1 NATIONAL DAY SPEECH (SEE FBIS SAIGON 020800 SEPTEMBER 74), EMPHASIZED ECONOMIC PROBLEMS AND PROGRESS, COMMUNIST SUCCESSES IN THE SOUTH AND HANOI'S INTENTION TO KEEP THE FIGHTING WITHIN BOUNDS WHICH DO NOT THREATEN THE COMPLETE DISMANTLING OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT. DONG ALSO HINTED AT DISUNITY WITHIN THE PARTY. END SUMMARY.

2. FOCUS ON THE ECONOMY. NOTWITHSTANDING HIS REFERENCE TO "IMPORTANT ACHIEVEMENTS" ON THE ECONOMIC FRONT, IT WAS CLEAR THAT DONG WAS NOT SATISFIED WITH THE NORTH'S PERFORMANCE DURING THE INITIAL MONTHS OF THE 1974-75 PLANNING PERIOD. THE CULPRIT, APPARENTLY, IS MANAGEMENT. DONG INDICATED SHORTCOMINGS IN THE MARSHALLING OF THE NORTH'S OWN RESOURCES AS WELL AS IN THE UTILIZATION OF FOREIGN AID. HE ALSO SPOKE STRONGLY OF THE NEED TO ERADICATE CORRUPTION AND OTHER ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES.

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3. ON THE AGRICULTURAL FRONT, DONG GLOSSED OVER THE FACT THAT

THIS HAS BEEN A DISASTROUS YEAR FOR THE NORTH. FOCUSING ON THE FACT THAT 190 COOPERATIVES HAVE PRODUCED OVER FIVE TONS OF PADDY PER HECTARE THIS YEAR, DONG CONVENIENTLY FORGOT TO MENTION WHAT HAPPENED ON THE REMAINDER OF THE NORTH'S 20,000 CO-OPS.

4. TYPICAL OF RECENT PUBLIC PRONOUNCEMENTS, DONG CAST ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AS A LONG TERM PROCESS. THIS CONTRASTS WITH HANOI'S LINE JUST AFTER THE SIGNING OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT WHEN THE LEADERSHIP WAS SEEMINGLY MORE OPTIMISTIC. IN THIS CONTEXT, DONG ALSO STRESSED THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE PROBLEMS ARISING FROM THE NEAR-DECADE OF WAR, TELLING THE PEOPLE, IN EFFECT, NOT TO EXPECT MIRACLES.

5. SITUATION IN THE SOUTH. DONG'S TREATMENT OF DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SOUTH WAS A VIRTUAL REPEAT OF HIS REMARKS ON THE SUBJECT LAST YEAR. ACCORDING TO DONG, DESPITE VIOLATIONS OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT BY THE US AND GVN, THE COMMUNISTS' POSITION COULDN'T BE BETTER. HE REITERATED HANOI'S DETERMINATION TO STRUGGLE FOR THE "SERIOUS IMPLEMENTATION" OF THE AGREEMENT. UNLIKE RECENT MEDIA COMMENTARY, DONG DID NOT CALL FOR THE OVERTHROW OF PRESIDENT THIEU. HE DID NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT PEOPLE IN GVN AREAS ARE STRUGGLING TO "REGAIN THE RIGHT TO MASTERSHIP STEP BY STEP AND IN DIFFERENT FORMS." THIS PHRASEOLOGY ALONG WITH THE VERBAL OBEDIENCE TO THE AGREEMENT SUGGESTS THAT HANOI DOES NOT CONTEMPLATE A SPEEDY VICTORY IN THE SOUTH. IN SO DOING, IT ALSO ARGUES AGAINST ANY DRAMATIC SHIFT IN WAR POLICY. IN SUM, DONG SEEMS TO BE PEDDLING THE LINE THAT, BY CONTINUING THE PRESENT MIX OF MILITARY, POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC ACTION AND ABETTED BY ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL PRESSURES ON THE GVN, THE COMMUNISTS WILL ULTIMATELY WIN.

6. HINTS OF DISUNITY. DONG CONCLUDED HIS ORATION WITH AN APPEAL TO PARTY MEMBERS TO "ACHIEVE UNANIMITY OF VIEWS AND UNITY OF ACTION". SIMILAR APPEALS ON THE GENERAL POPULACE ARE STANDARD FARE IN HANOI PROPAGANDA, BUT ONLY RARELY ARE THEY DIRECTED SPECIFICALLY AT THE PARTY. PERHAPS THE LEADERSHIP ITSELF WAS DIVIDED OVER POLICY OPTIONS DURING RECENT CONCLAVE. (THE ABSENCE FROM PUBLIC VIEW OF MOST OF THE POLITBURO DURING JULY AND AUGUST IS SUGGESTIVE OF A HIGH-LEVEL GET-TOGETHER.) DONG, THUS APPEARS TO BE CALLING ON PARTY MEMBERS TO FORGET PAST DIFFERENCES AND TO SUPPORT AND IMPLEMENT WHATEVER NEW LINES WERE ULTIMATELY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRIME MINISTER, ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, ARMISTICE, SPEECHES, INDEPENDENCE CELEBRATIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 05 SEP 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: shawdg
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974SAIGON11601
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740245-1082
From: SAIGON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740972/aaaaciyi.tel
Line Count: 109
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: shawdg
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24 APR 2002 by rowelle0>; APPROVED <04 MAR 2003 by shawdg>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PHAM VAN DONG REVIEWS STATE OF THE NATION
TAGS: PDEV, ECON, PGOV, VN, (PHAM VAN DONG)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005